A VIEW of 1684

MARRIAGE

From its Original;

With Reflections on the Vices of the

TIMES:

And a WORD to my

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY CAMBRIDGE

FRIENDS

AND

NEIGHBORS

Of what Perſwaſion ſoever.

You take me for your Enemy becauſe I tell you the Truth.

Printed for the Author. 1684.

THE PREFACE.

I ſhall not detain the Reader, with the occaſion of theſe enquiries, here ſubmitted to the publick view, and the cenſures of thoſe who are apt to except againſt and cavil at, what is offer'd them for their good, (only this) that I have had greater advantages to aſſiſt me therein, then every one hath, or can have, yet for any that in ſome things be otherwiſe minded I matter it not, they may think as they pleaſe, and in what I ſhall be found erroneous, I deſire no candid acceptance, therefore need no patronage or defence: that I have been taxed with the opinion of the lawfulneſs of two Wives, whether I would or no endeavour'd to be faſtned on me, and very gravely cenſured for what was never ſpoke or meant.

There is a well known diſtinction amongſt the Papiſts of venial and mortal Sin, and the grand Enemy of their Souls hath no ſmall advantage by it, but as They have their venial and mortal ſins, We have our groſs ones, that, are of great uſe: how that word firſt came up I know not, nor where coyn'd; the beſt deſcription I can give you of it is, that tis a palpable and well known ſin, and whether or no, the fault be ſmall or great it matters not, if it be ſuch a thing that will make a man Town talk, or a nine days wonder among Country Swains: and it hath been fairly ſpoken in commendation of ſome perſons tho too much addicted to lying, they are guilty of no groſs ſin God be thanked for it. But is there any thing whereof it may be ſaid, ſee, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. *Eccl.* 1. 10. For there were groſs ſinners as appears in our Saviours time, Publicans and Harlots, people of the moſt ſcandalous Profeſſion among the Jews, and there were fine ſpun ones, who were viſibly, and to outward appearance Saints, but to let their Character paſs. Any true account, of the Law of Nature hath for ſeveral ages been conceal'd from the people and the endeavour of the greateſt Clerks to keep them in

 ignorance

ignorance; notions of Marriage we have had derived from them, by which great disorders have been countenanc't converse with Books, you shall there find it brought to its Primitive State, look abroad and you shall see little sign of it; Marriage one would think were rather turn'd prostitute, and there is nothing in the world so uncouth or senseless but if brought within the Verge of Matrimony, the venerable name of Wedlock hath been made a Shrine for it. (To avoid grosser instances if a young Lady of the highest birth or quality should be stoln from her friends, or against their will and consent, match her self to a profligate wretch (for such things have been) after the notions that are rife of Marriage: this would be no sin at all in her but an honourable State, and when they are once wedded and bedded together (as they call it,) there is no remedy as they think to be had for it, then again (for such a case have I seen stated) should a mouy'd Letcher that hath one Foot in his Grave, marry with a young Wanton scarce out of her Teens, to satisfy his Lust, which she consents to for the Lust of his Pelf, this they say, were a bad thing, but rather then want an institution for it, shall fetch it, out of Paradise (non obstante) the flaming Sword; and when the knot is tied, however they live afterward, an holy and a happy State, altho a sin in a man for any cause to have more Wives then one at once, yet as soon as he can be shift of her, and the poor Soul is summon'd to her long home, it were no fault in him to marry another on what account soever, or successively as many as he list, when the opinion of the Fathers is exploded which is far more rational, and much more may be said for it, and for our modern arguments against Poligamy they have been derived from the old Romans or the new ones; and, as if our Laws and other Christian Nations where it is forbidden, were it not worth a mentioning from the Greeks, tho unnatural lusts were so common among them as if all sence of humanity were lost: by eminent men approved of and to say nothing of other Philosophers, Plato in his republick community of Wives, and is so far true that Poligamy was ill reputed of by the Athenians (their Laws not favouring it) and divorce detested, but for a woman to seperate from her husband reckon'd far worse, and termed delinquency or flat Rebellion at least, as a learned writer of their Antiquities doth note, and because they know not what to accuse the Patriarchs with: Lamech who was a wicked man had two Wives before the Flood, but why was Lamech a wicked man do you think? because he slew a man to his hurt? since an inundation of error and corruption in the Church to slay and massacre the innocent hath been held a meritorious act, and the truth is, were it a mans purpose to defend Poligamy he might bring arguments for it out of the Alchoran at that rate, for on such absurdities must they run themselves who state things, not as they are, but as they would have it; or think they may dissemble for a good cause tho they quite spoil it by overacting

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their part: on the other hand, our pretended wits, looking on Marriage as a meer cheat, are not a little proud of themselves that they have found out the knack of it, and when they cry down Matrimony as if it were an Enemy to Nature (which they think brook's no restraint) bring it as a Plea for themselves, tho never so much against it, and that the Scripture hath on both sides been miserably wrested is obvious enough: but to clear some passages in this discourse, I shall prove, that not only Poligamy *is unlawful, but a sing'le Marriage, may be sinful and evil, and that the Bed is undefiled, when Nature requires it. And that to speak strictly there can be no such thing as Clandestine, unlawful, or bad Marriage, and whereas in the Fourth Section, is defined the Law of Nature &c. I make it a Branch thereof and by Matrimony intend, either a publick Contract, or the evidences of a private Contract of Espousals that have been in use, and by this we see that Marriage is the same thing, all the world over and, have therefore drawn a judgement of it according to the various condition of humane life, and of man in his faln state, and before the fall, before and since the coming of Christ. In the Church the* Nicholaitans *were very early broaching their Heresie, which taught spiritual and corporal Fornication, community of women, and to eat of meats sacrificed to Idols. When the Mystery of iniquity began to work (as the pious and learned Dr.* Fulk *observes) second Marriages with some of the godliest of the Fathers, not with all of them, was but honest Fornication, or comely Adultery; such strange conceits had they then of Marriage and of Sin in the natural use, and were therefore mightily concern'd about it, as appears by their works, the famous Orator* Tertullian *therefore seperating from his Wife, conversing with her as his Sister, and exhorting her to a single life, and a like passage there is recorded of* Ammonius, *which is worthy your perusal, as you have it in* Socrates *his Fourth Book; in many things are they followed by learned men, who are conversant in their works; hence it is that a modern Author is proving two sorts of Adultery out of the Old Testament, and another that the Patriarch when he took* Rachel *to Wife (not before it seems) lived in Fornication with* Leah, *or in Adultery, tho no such small fault, as to be winked at either in Gods people or in other men, and for abuses of Marriage reckons* Poligamy *and* Sodomy (paria cum paribus) *the former could be no abuse of it when the freer use of it was not restrained, and for the latter, we may as well make Felony an abuse of Marriage; for what hath* Sodomy *to do with it, a crime against nature, a sin to mention without detestation and wickedness in the least inclination or thought. Of primitive Marriage or Wedlock there hath been in all ages some footsteps remaining tho imperfect, the Christian is of a man and one woman when lawfully Contracted, and after a Godly manner living together, it is a holy and a happy*

state

ſtate of life. As for thoſe Texts in the Epiſtles of St. Paul, *where it is ſaid that a Biſhop is to be the Husband of one Wife; very learned men have rendred it of* Poligamy, *ſome of the Fathers have I ſeen quoted for it, and among others St.* Chryſoſtom, *tho living in the Fourth Century, and for ſome time leading an auſtere life, I take not upon me to determine herein, but leave it thoſe who would do well plainly to inform us, what either their inſpirations, or extraordinary converſion which doth diſtinguiſh them, from their Chriſtian brethren, ſeeing Miracles are ceas'd.*

SECT.

SECT. I.

Of the Abuse of Matrimony.

THE Institution of Marriage hath been generally received, though with different Laws and Customs, by the consent of all Nations, in all times and ages of the World; it is agreeable to Reason, and necessary to the Well-being of Mankind, as well for mutual Society, and comfort of Life in particular persons, as the good and benefit of all. For without Marriage there can be no Family maintained, no Alliance, or distinction of Relations and Degrees amongst men, no Inheritance or Possession claimed by Descent, but all things being held in common, they must flock together in herds like wild Beasts, or as Savages and Cannibals prey upon, and devour one another; but there is no Ordinance of God or Man so sacred, as to be exempt from the tongues and pens of profane persons in this degenerate age we live in: neither Religion, or the Government has been free from their rage and malice, nor this of Marriage, although it hath its sanction from both.

It is observable, that of late years it has been the subject of luxuriant Pens to play and dally with, which they may safely handle without burning of their fingers, when the former has been found too hot for them to hold, a humour affected by many in their writings, who have no other way to recommend them to others, but their being singular from the rest of the world, or thereby to gratifie persons as debauched as themselves. Some, to make way for their unbounded lust, cry it down as useless, and out of fashion, exploding it as a state of bondage and slavery, strife and discontent, fit only for Fools, and low-spirited men, a Prison too narrow for their large Souls to be confined in. Others, that would seem more religious, pretend the inconveniences of a Married life, their hatred of Women, framing Satyrs and Invectives against the whole Sex, as if there were none good among them, or any thing good in them to make amends for the bad, lay all the inconveniences of life at their door, making it all one to be miserable or married.

It's true, all conditions of life have somewhat of trouble, or inconvenience more or less, the Single, as well as the Married, and there is none free from care and misfortune, in one kind or other; and many there are, who find not that content and satisfaction in a married state as they expected,

pected, which is not always free from infelicity even in those, who have no other design of entring thereinto, then what is agreeable to the nature of the Institution, and for which it was ordained, but hath worse event to others, who lightly or foolishly enter into it, or, what is worse, for some base ends and advantages they propose to themselves therein. Do not many men, on this account, marry those they would else hate to embrace, and women sell themselves for the sake of a Joynture, letting them take them off who bid the fairest, Chapman-like? It is a common thing to bargain, and chaffer for one another, (to make no worse comparison) like Masters with their Servants, who stand to be hired in a Statute-Fair, and when it comes to the upshot, ten Groats, or thereabout, shall part them. It's evident, whence many Matches have their Original; some only from filthy lucre and ambition, some from pure lust, from compulsion and force, or from other causes as bad, if not worse; and others there are, that make the same use of Matrimony as our first Parents of their Fig-leaves, who, were it not for this, would never lawfully come together, the occasion of not a few Matches among a brutish and rustick sort: although some there are, that from an honester principle, looking upon Divorce as evil, and honestly to make good their Promise, with the Publick Ceremonies compleat their Marriage, but is an argument rather of their gratifying a wanton desire, than of compliance only with the ends of Nature in it, and for which (as shall be proved in the *4th.* Section) it is enjoyned; and that not only Contracts in Matrimony, which are sinful, adulterous, incestuous, *&c.* but stollen and illegal Weddings, or that are not solemnized before a Congregation, are but improperly termed Marriages by reason there is some contract, but are not comprehended in our definition of it.

These are the chiefest Abuses of Matrimony, and more there are, which I shall not here insist on; therefore we need not wonder, that amongst so many bad Matches, which succeed ill, there are few very good ones, and so many in every corner on the Stool of Repentance, that are wise too late. The advice of Friends, I confess, is in this matter to be taken; a suitable Estate, and Equality, with moderation to be lookt on: and it hath been observed, that the firmest and most durable Friendship is betwixt Equals, insomuch that nothing can excuse the want of this, but a Love either founded on Vertue, or contracted and continued by mutual Endearments, and Obligations, and of such a nature as secures the mind against what may happen; yet seeing this falls out but seldom, and is the priviledge but of a few, I am not of their mind who prescribe it in Matrimony as a *Catholicon*, or general Receipt, or that make it the only ground

ground thereof. It must be confess'd, that where such a Love is, there mutual Fidelity springs therefrom, and is entire and constant, more therefore to be valued than Duty constrained by Conscience only, or by Law confined: the former is also conjugal, in respect of the Laws of Matrimony, and the Custom of those Countreys where Joyntures and Portions are allotted, yet ought not to be made a Mony-matter only, and the Bags to be weighed, but some regard also to be had to the Worth and Vertue of the Person. And seeing we are obliged to perform our Relative duties on higher motives and inducements than meerly those of Nature, and whatever condition we are in, therewith to be content; it's our safest way to look after a solid and lasting foundation, which they that arrive not to in Matrimony, or fall short of, are exposed thereby to the assault of every Temptation, and deprived of that comfort and felicity, which makes the yoke of Marriage easie, and every condition of Life satisfactory, and pleasant.

SECT. II.

Of the Sins of the Times, so called, and of some things disputable, and several Opinions thereof.

IT hath always been the humour of some men to be justifying themselves by the failings of others, with a Thanks be to God they are not as such, or such a one; and where they bear any hatred or grudge, rather than have nothing to say of them, shall supply themselves with somewhat or other of their own forging. Another sort there are, that wrest the Scripture to justify what it doth condemn, and would make the failings of righteous men therein recorded, an Argument for their Villanies. But how great a difference there is between the one and the other, granting what they profanely alledge for themselves, and always misapply, is no hard matter to discover. But I shall here only instance in some few things, and first in what every one loves, and few refuse, when they can have it on free cost, a glass of brisk Canary, or a cup of Ale well maulted. The Wisest of men tells us, that *Wine is a mocker, and strong Drink raging*, and in another place, *Look not thou upon the Wine when it is red in the cup, and giveth its colour, moving its self aright*; yet a Wiser than *Solomon* allows the use of it, and at a Feast turns Water into Wine for entertainment of the Guests, who had drank plentifully before; and Wine, as the Psalmist expresseth it, *makes glad the heart of man*. But it is an easie

matter to reconcile these: The first you see is meant of the immoderate use, in which respect such as are apt to be insnared therewith are not so much as to look thereon; in the other instances, we find a moderate use approved of, tending only to health, or mirth, at seasonable times, never to excess, and a sober person, if his means will afford it, may keep it either in his Cellar, for the entertainment of his friends, or to take now and then a cordial draught. Now supposing that such a one should be on a time ensnared, and tope a cup too much, or if it be more than once, this is not well indeed, but a fault in him, and can be no excuse for such debauched wretches as are seldom sober, but always abusing themselves and the creatures, that are lent them for their use, when to drink one another down, is an exercise of manhood, and a trial of strength with them, and no entertainment, though ever so costly, esteemed of without it. This commonly begins in a dinner, that ends in a drunken-bout, when by overcharging their stomachs, before charged with gluttony, the skill of the best Physicians hath been often puzled to find a cure for the Surfeit. Some there are, that this way spend what should maintain their Families, and any thing shall go down with them, rather than want fuel to supply their lust, their sottishness being no small advantage to those that live by their sins, or for want of it lie spunging on other men, who rather than go the broad way, without companions like themselves, shall bear their expences, when their wives and children have scarce the benefit of a cup to quench their thirst. Much less then can the failings of righteous men, recorded in the Scripture for our caution, not example, be a warrant for those who imitate not their vertues, though they quote their vices, but exceed them in these, as far as they come short of them in the other.

Now to apply this to our present case, for it is the same thing in matter of Opinion, as Practice. Had I maintained Polygamy lawful, it was a mistake in me, but (as I said then) more excusable than of those that allow themselves in worse, yet came to condemn what was never offer'd at, for such there were that I had to do with. Why should they talk of the Lawfulness of things, that reckon nothing Unlawful? men of as little Conscience as Sence, yet are good Common-wealths-men, and reasonable in their way, for a single Whore shall satisfie three or four of them, or more, and the first that comes shall be first serv'd. These men are much the same to their wives, as your drones are to the hony-bees, and in nature are no less, carrying all out, but bringing nothing in, to the great detriment of their females, who labour at home for what they spend upon their Jilts abroad: Yet such as these shall take the Scripture in hand to begin an argument against Plurality of Wives, but can find nothing there

there that concerns themſelves, all is well with them, however they live in Adultery, or the worſt of Sins. But let us deſcend a while to the other Sex, and take a view of them, and we ſhall find ſuch women, that are notorious bad themſelves, the apteſt to enquire into the failings of other people. The breach of Marriage hath been a light thing with ſome, or a common practice; not with very many, for the generality are honeſter, and *ſtrange* women have but few fellows, for ſo the Adultereſs is ſtiled by one that knew her properties, though not by experience, (as may be well ſuppoſed, for there is nothing of that nature recorded of him) in his Proverbs he gives us an elegant character of her, and whether her paths lead. *Chap. 2. v. 17.* ſhe is ſaid to *forſake the guide of her youth, and the covenant of her God*, and in chapter 5. *Her feet go down to death, and her ſteps take hold of hell*, or the *grave*, for ſo it may be rendred, according to what we find in the 6th chapter, *the Adultereſs will hunt for pretious life, and whoſoever toucheth her ſhall not be innocent.* See the other paſſages in that chapter concerning her, and in the next the deſcription of a Harlot in her impudence, and ſubtlety; where you may find, that Adultereſſes, by giving way to ſin, arrived to that height of wickedneſs, as to become proſtitute, although theſe paſſages are by ſome taken in another ſenſe as well as the literal, as are thoſe ſayings concerning Wiſdom, in ſeveral places of this Book: In the literal ſenſe they are true alſo, *her feet abide not in her houſe*, and ſhe is ſaid to be *loud* and *clamorous*. How ready are ſuch women, if you obſerve them, to gad abroad, and enquire into the failings of others, and to render them, if they could, as odious and as wicked as themſelves, reckoning themſelves ſafe when they can get ſomewhat or other by the end to rake up dirt with, and fling it upon others, bewailing the ſins of the times, when they add to them in their number, weight, and meaſure.

In the next place I ſhall give you ſome obſervations of a Harlot, ſo I term her, the word *Whore* implying an Adultereſs as well as a Proſtitute; but we need not ſtand upon words and phraſes, when the difference betwixt things is plain, and obvious: and it is an ill ſign that the word is grown ſo common in theſe times, inſomuch that if two good women fall out, they will ſtraight way to whoring one another, as if they were ambitious of the title. A Harlot hath been deſcribed one that proſtitutes her body neither for love nor luſt, but for gain: by the word *Proſtitute* is implied her Trade, or courſe of life, and Gain the end of it, and in reſpect of both ſhe is common. Theſe for their wicked courſe of life were always infamous, and men have been ever ready to abuſe them for their bought love, as againſt nature. And we read in *Geneſis* of one that was to

be brought forth and burnt, being taken for a Harlot, *chap.* 38. where you may see the manner of a Harlot in those days counterfeited by *Thamar*, and a rigorous proceeding from *Judah*, who had little reason to accuse her, and bring her forth to punishment, although there was none allotted them by the Levitical Law, they ought not to be suffer'd amongst the *Israelites*; and we find it forbidden in these words, *There shall not be a Whore among the daughters of my people*, and in the next verse, *The hire of a Whore, and the price of a dog shall not be brought into the Sanctuary, for they are both an abomination to the Lord*, Deut. 23.17. and elsewhere; yet that there were such among them, is more than probable by the aforesaid passages, and we read also of the Harlots that King *Solomon* past a Judgment betwixt, but it may be thought not so numerous as in our times, with their Pimps, Bawds, and other assistants, too long to mention, and too foul to blot paper with.

In some Nations they were held in great account, as with the old *Romans*, who prohibited Poligamy but allowed of Stews, some of their Princes maintaining flocks of whores, and keeping them at their tables, where they have ministred naked, and serving for the entertainment of their Guests, as you may find in their Lives. In some nations they were worshipt with Divine honours, as *Flora* by the *Romans*; and in *Cyprus*, where *Venus* had her Temple, Harlots were solemnly invocated, as *Lucina*, or *Ceres*. This need not seem strange to us, for they were Heathens, when with those that have the means of better knowledge, Rebels and Traitors have been canoniz'd for Saints, and as devoutly prayed to as the blessed Virgin: Brothel-houses and Stews have been erected, with immunities bestowed on them, and a tribute exacted, as an acknowledgment to their pious Benefactors. With us their houses are scarce secure from the illegal violence of the rabble, who frequent them one day, and as the whim takes them, are for pulling them down the next. The pretence for them hath been, that without these, Adulteries, Incests, *&c.* would be frequent, by this means prevented, a bad cure for a worse distemper, and ends in disease and beggary to those that frequent them: and though some pretend, they resort thither only to see the manner of them, it is not every one hath that command of himself, and tis better for a man to avoid a temptation, than to run himself upon it. There are too many of them every where, in the Country, as well as in populous Cities, and there's many an honest man that makes a conscience of sheep-stealing, makes none at all of being concern'd with them.

As for those which are termed *Concubines*, (and now by a new name, *Misses*,) they were not for Procreation only maintained, and was a privi-

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ledge taken by Kings, (I know not *quo Warranto* by their Subjects,) but several Wives were had and maintained, not only by the best of men, but meaneſt perſons, and their children were to inherit according to their Birth-right, for Baſtards were to be excluded from the congregation till the tenth generation, and the Sons of Concubines only received Gifts: by which it appears, that Matrimony was not celebrated in the taking of them as for their Wives, but ſome Contract by which they were taken, and had a right unto the bed, although their children had no claim of Eſtate. Not only this, and Poligamy, but the taking of a ſecond Wife after deceaſe of a former, hath by ſome of the Ancients been made Fornication, or all one with Adultery, the wrong and injuſtice of Adultery never weighed by them: in what ſence it may be termed Fornication ſee the *5th.* Section, and what might occaſion that opinion, in the *9th.* But what would they then have ſaid to ſuch old Dotards, that having increaſed the world with children or grand-children, by a former wife or wives, and well ſtricken in years marry, not a grave Matron to keep their houſe, or breed up their charge for them, but a young Virgin, to ſleep in their boſoms, or to keep their backs warm in cold weather? Surely they would have bitterly exclaimed againſt this, and is no ſign of ſelf-denial in any, whatever they pretend to, or profeſs. Their Penance alſo for Adultery was in ſome places very ſevere, and for ſeveral years, or to a ſet time exacted; unwarrantable, had not the licentiouſneſs of the times then required a ſeverer diſcipline: For the adulterous and inceſtuous perſon in the Church of *Corinth*, who had committed a ſin, not named among the Gentiles, in taking his Fathers Wife, was to be delivered to Satan, and debarred the communion of the Faithful, till he returned by Repentance, and, the evil being taken away, again reſtored,

After this error and corruption prevailing over truth, in thoſe that were given up to deluſion, and a reprobate ſenſe, Marriage was made a Sacrament, too holy for Prieſts to partake of it; a policy of thoſe times, and was thought no wrong to their function, that Matrimony be denied them, for Church-lands are not inheritable, and for not anſwering the Law they have a Diſpenſation amongſt themſelves: But this was an occaſion of ſin to ſuch as could not abſtain, living in whoredom for the moſt part; for if they uſually kept private Conſorts, or lived in clandeſtine Marriage, every one had then perceived their deceit, with their ſinful contempt of the Law, and the Matrimony of their Church, when not only the meaner ſort, but Princes, and the greateſt Perſonages were impoſed upon, and Monarchs bowed down their necks, the laws of Nature and of Nations made void by their Decrees. Fornication thus became a profita-

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ble sin, the crime of Adultery a mony matter, and to be bought off at a cheap rate, but Poligamy was an offence never to be pardoned by Christs pretended Vicar, tho Divorce dispens'd with, to those that were in his favour; which was a great blessing to them, or else for the introduction of a Favoret, or for want of a pretence to put away their Wives. Some crime or other hath been suborn'd against them to take away their innocent lives, as if the taking of another Wife, the former being retained, were a worse fault, then not only Divorce, but Perjury, Murther, or any thing, tho never so contrary to the Laws of Nature and Humanity, writ in the Hearts of all: Poligamy not agreeable to that state of perfection, and self denyal required in the Gospel, and may therefore be reprehended, for we are to examine things by the word of God, and judge them according to reason, nor by the false Notions of any, much less of those times, when not only the Laity, but inferior Clergy, were usurpt over by their High Priests, and by a Forreign Power inslaved.

SECT. III.

The partiality of some men to themselves, and the vices to which they are addicted.

HAving dispatcht these things I shall now apply my self to others, wherein I desire no one to believe me any further then I shall make things out by the Scripture, either by plain proof, or reasons thence deduced, and for such passages as concern the Scum of the Earth or Hypocrites, the Pest of Societies, let them take them to themselves being designed for them, and amend what is amiss, or fairly unmask themselves that honest men may know them. The first thing I shall observe is, what many alledge in one case, yet take little notice of in others, the depravity of our heart and thoughts, in that of Adultery, which they make all one with the actual sin, for *Math.* 5. 27. *Ye have heard that it hath been said by those of old time, Thou shalt not commit Adultery*, and in the next Verse, *Whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his heart*: very well, our Saviour hath said it, and no one can deny it to be Adultery in the heart, but what then? Is it all one as if he actually committed it, what is it then to resist a temptation to any sin, if it bringeth profit and advantage with it? If it be all one, for the words of some people import no less; yet we see the Laws of God and Man have pro-

propounded rewards and encouragements to the one, and have alotted punishments for the other: I conceive therefore, with submission to better judgements, First, that the heart of man is the root of all evil, and not only actual sins, but sinful thoughts are culpable and forbidden. Secondly, hereby also a rule and method is given us, that to abstain from actual sins we must keep our hearts clean; and we find that *David*, after the Commission of this sin, desired of God a clean heart, and sincerity in the inward parts. Thirdly, this rule is not given us in this alone, tho some men are apt to pick and choose, and take so much of their duty as will serve their turn, leaving the rest upon the hands of other men, as if it did not concern them, or for want of impartial consideration therein: Fornication is also a sin, take it in what sense you will, either for all manner of uncleanness, or in any other, for the propriety of words is not always retained, but promiscuous and mixt, as to the use of them in most languages. Adultery is sometimes stiled Fornication, and sometimes both are spiritually meant; Apostacy and false Worship being stiled Fornication, a Similitude taken from a Womans forsaking her Husband, to which Idolatry is likened in the Old and New Testament, and that Whoredome is termed Fornication, is clear, as also incest. 1 *Cor.* 5. being a common name for either of them, or altogether; but in answer to them that pretend otherwise, Fornication is a sin in their sense, and in which it is usually taken in common Speech, and is referred to the Seventh Commandment, as a Breach of that precept, as Slander and Lying to the Ninth, *Thou shalt not bear false Witness*, couzenage and deceit in dealing to the Eighth, *Thou shalt not Steal*: And as the learnedst of Princes observes in his *Basilicon Doron*, publisht by his Majesties command, tho the generality count but a small sin, there is no sin that is light or small; it is forbidden to [illegible] Christians on the account of scandal, and offence, as in the Synod of the Apostles and Elders in the *Acts*, *Chap.* 15. where it is made necessary to abstain from Fornication as well as Blood, things strangled and offer'd to Idols; for no offence was to be given to the unbelieving Jews, and it is forbidden by St. *Paul* in his Epistles, and in other places, on the account of Purity; as are several other things also, by some accounted small matters. *Rom.* 13. 13. *Gal.* 5. 19.

Fornication is a sin [illegible] is a sin, and a crime acknowledged by all, even by the light of Nature; but as I said before, this rule is not given us in this alone, as if it were worse than all other sins, for what do we think of the sin of Murther; are not our hearts to be lookt to in the first motions of malice, hatred, anger, *&c.* and may we not judge of evil habits or vitious inclinations, by the nature of those sins to which they have a tendence:

dence: and what exceeds Murther, tho Adultery comes the neareſt to it, as in that of *Uriah*; we muſt be ſo far from this ſin, as not to be angry with our Brother without a cauſe, nor judge him raſhly; we know what our Lord ſaith, he is in danger of, that doth this: and altho that of Adultery is left with a bare caution, there is but little difference, for he whoſe mind will ſerve him to take his Neighbours Wife, (it may be thought) were it not for the Law, would not much ſcruple to take away his life alſo, to ſecure him in the continuance of his ſin: good Expoſitors therefore render it of ſuch a luſt or paſſion, as draws with it the conſent of the will.

Altho as much may be ſaid of ſeveral other ſins, I ſhall give but one inſtance more, and that is, of Covetouſneſs, which is a luſt and concupiſcence, as well as the former, and is termed Idolatry, becauſe covetous men ſet their hearts upon Riches, and worſhip *Mammon*: ſee what our Saviour ſaith of this in many places, we ought not ſo much as take thought for the morrow (in a carking and ſollicitous way as many do) at ſo great a diſtance we are to keep our ſelves from covetouſneſs, and inordinate deſire of wealth, yet there is little notice taken of this; how doth one brother endeavour to ſupplant another in their Trade and Dealing; they that are rich, and have no need of it? And ſome there are, who deny themſelves the pleaſures and comforts of life they might otherwiſe enjoy, yet fall as ſhort of true wiſdom as the voluptuous Epicure, who wallows in riot and luxury, and thinks no further then to gratify his ſence: I ſpeak not of them, who take a moderate care of their Families, which is the duty of every Chriſtian, but of uncharitable Miſers, who take pride in themſelves, as better than other men, and are ſo wiſe in their own conceits, as to turn the Fool upon thoſe, who apply their minds to the Studies of Wiſdom and Science, or take delight, and enjoy themſelves, in what God hath given them, which of all Vanities is the leaſt under the Sun. *Eccl.* 2.

I deſign brevity, or I could inſtance in ſeveral other ſins of the heart, and its worth ones enquiry; how chance theſe things are no more minded by ſome, that ſhall quote the other for every trifle, and are ſo partial to themſelves in things of a like nature, which the holy Scripture knows no difference betwixt, equally forbidding them, but are little minded by ſome men, who in that of Adultery make all things alike, and know no difference between righteous *David* with *Abiſhag* in his Boſom, and wicked *Herod* with his Brothers Wife: their Sentiments are of little advantage to the cauſe of Morality, conſidering what a liberty they take in other matters, but are all works of the Fleſh, and of the Old man, which is to be put off, and not forbidden in the Goſpel, only as they are ſinful; as Murther, Theft, *&c.* by the Moral Law, but as the minds of men are thereby in-

indiſpoſed unto heavenly myſteries, and holy Writ in many places gives us a Catalogue or Summary of our failings and defects, with ſuch ſins and crimes we are by nature prone unto, not as if they were all one, for the Law of God in Judicial caſes, and where it is required, makes a difference; but the depravity of our nature is thereby ſhown, containing in it the Seeds of all ſin, which like noxious Weeds, of a poyſonous nature, are beſt nipt in the Bud, to prevent their growth, and that ſtate of perfection in this life we all ought to aſpire unto, according to that of our Saviour, *Be you perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.* In this reſpect, as the leaſt of ſins is not Venial, the beſt performances have nothing of merit in them, our Obedience being imperfect; yet the diſtinction of the Roman Divines as to Venial and Mortal ſins might be admitted, if they meaned thereby ſuch failings, as are not inconſiſtent with a State of Grace, and in reſpect of which the righteous man is ſaid to *fall Seven times in a day, and riſeth again by Repentance*; and the wicked practices of the unregenerate, in which good men never allowed themſelves, but if fallen into, their repentance was eminent and ſignal in their recovery; they did not boaſt and glory in them, as too many do, who call themſelves Chriſtians, but may better ſtile themſelves Infidels, Atheiſts, or any thing, than Profeſſors of Chriſtianity.

Religion not only ſuffers by theſe, but a demurer ſort, who dreſs up the faults and vices of other men in Bear-skins to be baited, that the Eyes of the croud may be drawn off from themſelves, and no notice taken of their innocent practices: Such are fraud and deceit in dealing, extortion and oppreſſion of the poor, ſlander and officious lying, which ſome are very expert in; to ſay nothing of Pride, which inclines them to be vilifying others, and exalting themſelves. And what fine names have they got wherewith to guild over their darling Corruptions, and conceal them from the view of the world? for as the former perſons, againſt whom theſe for the moſt exclaim, becauſe their ſins are more perceptible to the vulgar ſort, and eaſier to make a noiſe with, account Fornication but a trick of youth, profane Swearing an Ornament, or Grace of Speech, and Drunkenneſs good Fellowſhip: theſe writing after their Coppy ſhall tell you, what is all this but Frugality, or a provident care for themſelves and Families, a friendly part in a Makebate, commendable cunning, to ſhift in the world. Theſe, tho they are wiſer than Serpents, are not ſo innocent as Doves, but rather like ravenous Harpies and Birds of prey, fly at all that comes near them, and whatever they can ſeize on, is their own, however they come by it, letting ſlip no occaſion, however ſo injuſt, to promote their intereſt; altho compariſons are odious, where there is neither good, its eaſy to demonſtrate how contrary theſe things are to the will of our

Creator, revealed in his word, to which we ſhould in all things conform our ſelves, and to the attributes of that perfection we are to imitate, as well as adore in the practice of mercy, in truth, and juſtice. I ſhall recommend to them the peruſal of the Fifteenth *Pſalm*, where they may ſee, *Who they are that ſhall abide in the Tabernacle of the Lord, and dwell in his holy Hill*, and to other places of that Book, where it appears, what was then the temper of Holy men, who had an equal reſpect to all Gods Commandments: and is not the practical part of Religion the ſame now as then, for the Moral Law is not aboliſht. But if any ſhall object, there are but few that live up to this; to ſuch I anſwer, they are not a few, that ſincerely endeavour it, and altho in one reſpect or other the beſt of men fall ſhort of their duty, they are not juſtified by the works of the law, but by the righteouſneſs which is of Faith; and for the weakeſt of Chriſtians there is great difference between ſuch, and thoſe who perform no religious duties, publick or private, but make a ſcoff and deriſion at every thing that is ſacred.

SECT. IV.

The Inſtitution of Marriage, and why it oftimes ſuccedeth ill.

MArriage is the Law of Nature, for Propagation of Mankind; *For God having created every living Creature after its kind, created Man after his own Image.* Gen. 1. 27. *And God bleſſed them, and ſaid unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and repleniſh the Earth*: the like Bleſſing we alſo find pronounced to *Noak* and his Sons, after the Flood, although theſe places have been wreſted by evil men to ſerve their luſt. Fornication was never inſtituted, but proceedeth from the evil of our hearts, and ſhows the depravity of our nature, in this and other things corrupt, according to that of the Pſalmiſt, *Man that is in honour, and abideth not, is become like the Beaſts that periſh.* The command is to Increaſe and Multiply, but how? *Every thing according to their kind*: the Brutes obſerve their Seaſons by a natural inſtinct, the like may be ſaid of Vegetables, they have their ſeveral ways of propagating their kind; and that Axiom here takes place, *actus cujuſlibet rei eſt admodum exiſtentiæ.* How falſe then is that which I have heard ſome affirm, That were it not for the Law that bounds them, men would procreate like other Creatures, or come together like Beaſts: they never well examine things that aſſert this; how injurious

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is it to the dignity of humane nature, unless they mean thereby some other Law besides a civil constitution, by which their lusts are regulated, either by the law of Nature, which shall be further explained, or by a natural desire or passion, which is not to all women in common? And from whence proceeds those Solemn Oaths and Vows that are usual with Lovers, and a Contract, as the learned *Grotius* observes, *ne tam Sanctum animal homo ex incerto Semine nascatur*; and further he saith, *Lex Hebræa uni viro plures concedit uxores*, which he proves from several places in the Old Testament, which doth not prove that Poligamy is founded in nature, but that men by the Law of Nature were not limited to one woman, therefore not forbidden by the Hebrew Law, which, as he well observes, *Omnem Spurcitiem inhibet*; their Law being in this agreeable to this Law of Nature, which is Marriage, of which the Breach is forbidden in the Seventh Commandment.

The reasons why this liberty is now restrained, I shall give you in the next Section; and it is apparent that in these corrupter times, with too many, were it not for the Laws of Matrimony, there would be neither Mistress nor Wife, but their desires would be boundless; but they lived more according to nature in the first and purest ages of the world. For Marriage is a natural constitution, honourable in all, and Matrimony not a permission, as some ignorantly suppose, to satisfy their lust, but an Evidence of conjugal love, when according to law they are pronounced Man and Wife, the Solemnest action of their lives whereon their well or ill being very much depends; when such as are led by false notions thereof, or an implicit faith therein, against nature, which are equally pernicious, they may debauch themselves thereby, and if undone by it, they may in part thank themselves. So true it is that there is a Law of Nature in this respect, and that our desires are to be regulated according to equity and justice, which they that deny, crying out, what do you talk of Nature or the Moral Law, as if they were abolished, make way hereby for the profane notions of Libertines and Atheists, who term Matrimony, a trick to get Money, and a crafty invention of the Priests.

When God had planted a Garden in *Eden*, and placed Man therein, the Woman was there formed, and Wedlock instituted in these words: *They two shall be one Flesh; and because she was taken out of Man, for that reason he should forsake Father and Mother, and cleave unto his Wife*: Wedlock you see was ordained in Paradice, and Monagamy, which excludes Bigamy, as well as Poligamy, Founded in Grace; and by the fall of our first Parents, and their Expulsion out of Paradice, with their holy and happy State there-

in expired, by our Saviour, who came to reſtore mankind; their loſt happineſs, recommended to his Diſciples, and by St. *Paul* enjoyned.

But Marriage took place, or rather continued in force, when that holy and happy State of our firſt Parents was expired; *good men and bad marrying and given in Marriage*, though amongſt the latter this Law of Nature in ſome places was almoſt Extinct, either by Fornication, or by unnatural luſt, as amongſt the men of *Sodom*, or by both; an inſtance of which we have in the firſt of the *Romans*, of the *Gentiles*, that retained not God in their knowledge, and were therefore given unto vile affections: amongſt good men, this Law was moſt conſpicuous, which made Poligamy uſed by ſome for increaſe of the world, and by others who took unto them Wives of thoſe they liked beſt: But it was a bad choice when the Sons of God went in unto the Daughters of men, and although there was a great liberty taken by good men in Marriage, yet not by all; for holy *Job* ſays thus of himſelf, that he *never looked on a Maid*, and the like may be ſaid of others, who were in this reſpect perfect, or like the Children of the Reſurrection, *neither marrying, nor giving in Marriage*: we find alſo that Matches made by Proxy are very ancient, as that for *Iſaac* by *Abrahams* Servant, by whom the Contract was made for him, and *Rebeckah* being taken into his Tent became his Wife.

The world increaſing, deſpotick power in all Families at length ceaſed; Dominion, which is founded in Nature, ſetled in each Precinct; and Monarchy, the moſt natural of Goverments, for the preſervation of each community eſtabliſh'd, as may be made appear from ſeveral places in *Geneſis*, when the Earth was repleniſh't after the deluge; Marriage became the care of the Laws, and publick Ceremonies required as an Evidence thereof: which in all Nations is termed marrying or taking to Wife, and though performed with different Rites and Ceremonies, according to the ſeveral religions and cuſtomes of Countries and Nations; ſome of them very ſtrange, and not material here to be inſerted. The word Wife hath been appropriated only to ſuch as were by the publik Ceremonies Contracted, which were uſually Solmnized with a Feſtival; thoſe that were taken by ſome other Contract but half Wives, as they are by ſome termed, the publick Rites, being the Evidence of Conjugal love.

Amongſt Chriſtians the Rites of celebrating Matrimony has been different, according to their ſeveral perſwaſions; with the Papiſts by their Ritual, and by the Quakers in their Meetings; who to do them no wrong, have a publick Evidence amongſt themſelves, and are ſo far in the right, that Matrimony ought to be performed in a Chriſtian manner, and before a Congregation, when an Evidence of Wedlock. The time hath been in this

this Nation that it hath been done before a Juſtice of Peace, and the Banes publiſht in the Market-Place, and now by a *Miniſter*, according to the Form preſcribed in the Service Book, and amongſt all, Matrimony hath been celebrated in one manner or other. There are ſeveral Laws alſo relating thereto, from which none are exempt, and is to be performed by all, becauſe of Legality by which Children inherit, and the neglect of it, where it may be had, is an argument of no Conjugal love, but that they are begotten in Fornication, and are Baſtards, or in a Contract without it as natural Sons. As to our Form of Matrimony it is to be obſerved by all men, as appointed by Law; and let me further add, that the Decrees of the Church are to be ſubmitted to in this, all muſt confeſs, at leaſt that profeſs themſelves her Sons, and of the ſame Communion, as it is requir'd by the Laws of the Realm, or the Canons of the Church; and that Marriage may be binding as to Law, Conſcience, and Nature.

Now that Matrimony by the Law of Nature is enjoyned is evident, and that ſome things are forbidden alſo, as by the Moral Law. I ſhall not here inſtance in ſuch things of this nature, that are various by the Laws of Matrimony, which has been different, and in all Countries not alike; and a judgement may be drawn of them, according to the condition of humane life; but we find forbidden by the Law of Nature Adulterous embraces, as a criminal wickedneſs, as alſo are inceſtuous luſts, within certain degrees of Conſanguinity; Whoredome or Proſtitution as againſt Nature, Rapes, forced Matches, and any Contract in Matrimony, without a lawful or rational ground thereof, which is a good will and liking in Marriage, confirmed by advice and conſent of Parents, therefore termed a choice, of which moſt people have Experience that are not vitiouſly given, though it can not always be had even by thoſe that endeavour it, according to that of the Preacher: *He that findeth a Wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth Favour of the Lord.* That there is ſuch a love is undeniable, and different from luſt, which is commonly without it, and for which a remedy is allways at hand, and may be had any where; but they that ſhall ſeek for a cure of Love in that way or method, may no where have it; (and becauſe I obſerve by ſome men it is made a Plea for their wickedneſs, I ſhall again diſcourſe of it in the Ninth Section) but to prevent cavil, ſhall here give one inſtance of it out of ſacred writ: Was it a mere luſt for which the Patriarch ſerved Seven years for *Rachel*? and it ſeemed to him but as a few days, for the love that he had to her; and when he had fulfilled her Weeks, he took her to Wife alſo, as well as *Leah*, the other Women he had Children by, not his Wives, but Servants: and although

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sacred History doth mention unequal love to several women by one man, not then disallowed of; yet this could not be in one woman to several men, because against nature, unless the distinction of Superiority were taken away, and they could cease from being the weaker Vessels; and impossible, as for a Servant to serve two Masters; by permission he may, reserving his obedience who hath a propriety in him, or he may serve several, whose interests are one and the same; which can never be here, in regard of the distinction of offspring and family taken from the man, but is uncertain and promiscuous, by Fornication, of Prostitutes, or of them that break their Contract of Espousals.

It hath been observed, and I wish I could call to mind the Author, who may better express it: I mention it as an acknowledgement to any, that upon another occasion hath concurred with me in opinion, which I must therefore give you in my own words: Their love is reciprocal in the nature of it, no taking its date so much from amorous desire and passion, as caused by that of man, from whom is derived their original and extraction. What exceeds this is blameable, and excess in nature, degenerating into that of the other Sex: it is an ill sign when the love of Men shall be slighted, by those who are ready to rigg on others, that regard them no further then to satisfy their lust; and it may be for that neither, were it not for their White or Yellow Blessings which carries them off: That it is not always had in Matrimony needs no further proof, or that some men are unsuccessful, that endeavour it when the weaker Vessels are warpt. It is a common fault with them, that such as come as Suitors, shall be slighted on that account, or serve for the diversion of them, and their Companions; and the rather if they are civil persons, recommended by their friends. This is an unpardonable fault in a man, and crime enough to expose him to the greatest contempt as may be, with such as, were there faults writ in their Foreheads, might be accounted no virtuous persons; but some allowance may be made them for scoffing and jearing, a commendable thing in a woman.

Another sort there are, that love to be courted and admired by all, passing away their youthful days in mirth and jollity, hating the thoughts of being confined to a Family, or the cares of a married life; and if it were upon a good account it were very well, and to be accepted against by none: These tho they hold not the name of a Suitor in so much derision as the former, yet the thoughts of a Husband is so frightful to them, that the mentioning of a mans name in that behalf shall render him as odious as may be; and then how long must they be waited on, e're access be gained, or a man shall be taken notice of as a Servant; and so me

ſome men there are, and thoſe not a few, that after a tedious courtſhip and addreſs, to their no ſmall coſt, are diſcarded only to make way for others.

But ſome one may reply, Do the aforeſaid perſons never marry, ſeeing there are few that marry not either firſt or laſt? Yes, without doubt they may, that they are Fleſh and Blood as well as others, there's no queſtion to be made of it; for if they are not fooled and drawn aſide by their irregular deſires, which Matrimony is made a Cloak for, and their Relations forced to conſent to it againſt their Wills, they may wait for Preferment, which they ſometimes meet with, when their Friends muſt marry alſo for the ſame reaſon, or take a thing called a Wife becauſe they want one: and not a few there are of either Sex, that having been much wronged by the fickleneſs and inconſtancy of their Lovers, put themſelves to grievous Pennance for their ſake, with reſolutions never to marry; when a match offers its ſelf ſoon forgot. Theſe are in part the cauſes of thoſe abuſes in Matrimony, mentioned in the firſt Section; when ſo few there are that marry on a virtuous account, and come together in the Lord, according to his appointment, in a ſolemn and religious manner; that love is frequently wanting, which is the only ground in nature or reaſon for the returns of kindneſs in a woman; but is always, or for the moſt part pretended. Hence it is that our Marriages are ſo corrupt, and if theſe evils could be once redreſſed, Poligamy and Divorce would have leſs warrant than they have, being forbidden without the obtaining of that Purity, which by their prohibition is deſigned.

SECT. V.

Of Poligamy, and Divorce.

THat Divorce is in ſome caſes forbidden, is plain by the words of our Saviour, in anſwer to a queſtion of the Phariſees; for there was a corrupt cuſtome amongſt the Jews, as you may find in the Writers of their Antiquities, to change their Wives, or for ſlight cauſes to put them away, marrying others: the Phariſees came and asked our Saviour this queſtion, *Whether it were lawful for a man to put away his Wife for every cauſe. Math.* 9. 3. *Mark* 10. 2. Chriſt not only anſwers them as to the man, but the woman alſo, although the woman had never any power to put away her Husband, nor permiſſion for it, yet ſhe might do this

his by departing from her Husband, and in that putting him away; but Christ telleth them it was permitted them by *Moses* for the hardneſs of their hearts, that is for a man to put away his Wife (but that this permiſſion ſhould extend to every ſlight or evil cauſe that the Jews then put away their Wives for, cannot be thence infer'd) *And he that puts away his Wife and marrieth another committeth Adultery in ſo doing*, or, as our Saviour in his Sermon on the Mount, mentioning only Divorce, *cauſeth her to commit Adultery.* For putting away their Wives they were forced either to marry again, or betake themſelves to other men for want of maintenance; and their Husbands by putting them away committed it themſelves, being acceſſory thereto; as *David*, though he ſlew not *Uriah* with his own hand, committed Murther by expoſing him to that danger, which aſcertained his death: and when they put away their Wives they frequently marryed ſuch as were Divorc't, which was an evil Cuſtome, and not much bettered by a Law in ſome Countries, where Divorces have been frequent; that to prevent Spurious iſſue, the women ſhould not marry until certain Months after their Divorce were paſt, but Chriſt telleth them, that it was not ſo from the beginning; and in reproving thereof uſeth the ſame words by which Wedlock was ordained. *Gen.* 2. 24. And hereby recommended to his Diſciples.

This beginning alſo may be taken from the time that this was permitted them, that is, when their Law was given by *Moſes*; and in either ſenſe it was not ſo from the beginning, nor, as we may obſerve, by holy and good men uſed: as we find by *Jacob*, though *Leah* was fraudulently given him, he put her not away; and when *Mical* the wife of *David* was taken from him, he committed not Adultery thereby, though ſhe lived in it, for after this, when he came to the Kingdom, he took her again to wife. From whence we may gather, that this evil cuſtom of Divorce was not from the beginning, nor uſed by good men; and that Chriſt, who was full of pitty and compaſſion unto all, approved not thereof. And we may further obſerve, that his Diſciples ſaying unto him, *If the caſe be ſo with a man and his wife, it is not good to marry*, he ſaid unto them, *every one cannot receive this ſaying, but they to whom it is given*: He further telleth them, (this need not ſeem ſo ſtrange, or hard a matter to them,) that ſome are made Eunuchs by *men*, ſome are ſo *naturally*, and ſome have made themſelves Eunuchs for the *Kingdom of Heaven's* ſake. By miſtake of this Text, and other places of Holy Writ, the Chriſtian world has been filled with divers Orders of Religious, but that thoſe words relate to the time preſent or paſt is clear, and they were not then in being, but there was a Sect of the Phariſees ſo preciſe on this account, that

that they would ſhut their eyes when they went forth of doors, leſt they ſhould ſee a woman; but how zealous they might be on this reſpect come you to their works of Devotion and Piety, and you ſhould have found them making of long Prayers, to devour Widows houſes with violence and oppreſſion in their hands. I deny not but in the Apoſtles times there were holy men and women dedicating themſelves to the Service of God, and the Church, leading a ſingle life, voluntary, not compelled, and the like we alſo find among the *Iſraelites*. We read of *Anna* a Propheteſs, and a widdow of great age, who *departed not from the Temple, ſerving God with Faſting and Prayers day and night*: Luke 2.36. And the holy ſtate of Virginity and Widdows in the Primitive Church was greatly eſteemed. There were alſo holy Monks and holy Hermits, driven into deſert places by Perſecution, or leading a ſolitary life; but Superſtition and Abuſes crept in betime, Religion being placed therein, and the Monks taking upon them the holy function, was the occaſion of great contention between them and the Secular Prieſts, who were in ſome places excluded from their Beneſices by the Patrons of Monkery, and at length Marriage denied them, for which they can bring no Scripture-proof.

From the next words immediately following, *he that is able to receive it, let him receive it*, we may obſerve, That as ſome Learned men make thoſe words of our Saviours a Prohibition in all caſes except Fornication, and the *Roman* Divines run it ſo high, as if it were an Article of our Creed, not to be called in queſtion, though it hath been diſpenſed with by them as before-mention'd, yet all do not ſo receive it. I could give you the opinions of very knowing men of the Laity, and Divorces have been confirmed for other cauſes than Adultery by Clergy-men of the Church of *England*, and by ſome of the Diſſenters hath been held lawful, when the ends of Marriage are not anſwer'd, as well for mutual Society, and comfort of Life, as procreation of children. This is not only the private opinion of ſome few perſons: the *Aoyſſin* Chriſtians, that for the largeneſs of their Territories, and early converſion to the Faith are inferior to none, their cuſtom was, that Marriages ſhould be diſſoluble at the pleaſure of parties, till by the Fathers of the miſſion, ſent thither to reconcile them to the Church of *Rome*, they were made irrevocable, unleſs by Diſpenſation, or Sentence, as is to be ſeen in an account of the Tranſactions of the Jeſuits, and other Emiſſaries there, collected out of *Wanſleb*: and *Ludolphus*, in his Hiſtory of *Ethiopia*, gives it as the opinion of the *Alexandrian* Church. The reaſon why it hath been ſo taken is, becauſe it is not directly but by conſequence forbidden, as our Saviour giveth reaſons to his Diſciples to diſſwade them from it, in his Sermon on the

Mount, were he purgeth the Law of the corrupt Gloſſes of the Phariſees. From the whole we may gather, that not only Divorce, but Separating for a time, without maintenance, is ſinful; and that every one, as far as he can attain thereto, is to make good his Contract.

Now upon what account it is forbidden is apparent, not as ſome men fancy, and as the ignorant and unlearned, who think it was good, or no harm in it before the coming of Chriſt for men to put away their wives, but evil ſince; nor wherein Religion is concerned more now than it was then, and forbidden for the ſake of that, as ſome things have, that were elſe indifferent for their tendence in that reſpect; as marrying, or going in unto women, of their neighbors, who were Idolaters, or the making any league with them, was forbidden unto the *Iſraelites*, leſt they ſhould be drawn into Idolatry thereby; when in *Sittim*, by fornication with the *Midianitiſh* woman, ſent thither by the advice of *Balaam* to entice them to ſin, they were joyned to *Baalpeor*, ſacrificing and bowing down unto their Gods, for which the anger of the Lord was kindled againſt them; and after this againſt *Solomon*, when by his ſtrange wives he was drawn to Idolatry, building them high places for their Gods near the Temple of the Lord, tranſgreſſing his commandment therein, for which the Kingdom was rent from him and given to his Servant; and after this againſt *Ahab*, *Aſa*, and *Jehoſophat*, Kings of *Iſrael* and *Judah*, theſe things having been forbidden them as tending to corruptions in religion, and worſhip; but our Saviour reproveth Divorce, as the cauſe of Adultery, for greater purity in wedlock. We may farther obſerve, as the hard-hearted Jews then abuſed that permiſſion of *Moſes*, for ſlight cauſes putting away their wives, there are not a few in our days that abuſe our conſtraint, never valuing what unadviſed matches they make up, ſo they may have an advantage by it, though never ſo much againſt the will and pleaſure of Parents, or unſatisfying to either of the parties, from whence adulteries and other evils oft proceed, as vexatious Law-ſuits, differences and diviſions betwixt Relations, and no end of their care and trouble; and to this they are incouraged by our confinement, good in its ſelf, but is thus abuſed to the undoing of many.

Poligamy, which I ſhall next treat of, of women there can be no ſuch thing, becauſe againſt nature. Amongſt the ancient *Britains* we read of ſeveral men living together with one woman, and with near relations in inceſt; a barbarous cuſtom! but as they were Heathens, what kind of people they were, and the manners of them, is to be ſeen in *Cæſar's* Comment, *Tacitus*, and other writers; but this was Whoredom, not Poligamy, which was allowed in the beſt of Common-wealths, and uſed by

good

good men, but for greater reasons than every one can produce, or could be commonly given for it: and such there might be amongst the Primitive Christians, that had more wives than one, and were not obliged to put them away, may be supposed from those words in the Epistles of St. *Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*, that *Bishops and Deacons ought to be the husbands of one wife*, or men of *one* woman, the words implying either, in this and other places; or else it may be taken in this sense, that they might not take a *second* wife, after decease of a *former*, and forbidden the Clergy as unseemly in them, who are in every thing an example to those they are set over in the Lord. But whatsoever may be alledged for or against it, considering the same Apostle advises some *not to marry at all*, the cares and troubles of a married life, and they that *have wives, are to be as if they had them not*, the law of this, and of other Nations that forbids it, is more agreeable to Christian institution and practice, whatever any one may think to the contrary: For some there are that have thought otherwise, and have written in defence of it, and for a toleration; but I never saw any thing on this subject, which if granted, would prove useless to most.

But that which seemeth to me of greatest weight against it, is this, That if man had continued in the state of Innocence, there had been no other way of propagating Mankind, but by inseparable union of Male and Female, which had not then been dissolved by death. On this account the opinion of some of the Fathers is not without ground, that condemn Bigamy as well as Poligamy, but the making them all one with Adultery, is as groundless as any thing in the world; and then what allowances have been on this account, have been in condescention to our frailty, or as the condition of humane life may require; not evil, or sinful, though not according to that Institution of Wedlock, which had continued by Monogamy in the state of Innocence: and then, were it not for the abuses of Matrimony, Divorce would be useless, and Poligamy is more unwarrantable now than in times past, seeing the Precepts of Christ tend to reduce us in this, as in other things, to that state of perfection and purity from whence we are fallen, and the Laws that forbid it, where Christianity is received, and with us in force.

But they that hold, for a single man to go in unto a woman, is but Fornication in him, whatever it be in her; or if a man commit a fault, his wife may as well do the same, I need not give my self the trouble to refute them; for if it were all one, the failings of one could be no plea for the other: The first are persons debaucht, and profane, for the most part; the latter, though they shut out an enemy at one door, let him in more

dangerouſly at another; for vitious men conſider not ſo much the evil of their actions, as ſhame, and diſgrace, or to ſave charge, and expence, but when they ſhall be on all hands encourag'd, what can we expect but inundation of ſin, and of ſuch a nature, that amongſt others, haſtned thoſe judgments, that were pronounced againſt the impenitent Jews by their Prophets. Is not their Idolatry, the worſt of evils, compared to the *whoredom of a woman in forſaking her husband*, and their Seducers likened to *fed horſes neighing after their neighbours wives.* I envy not to women their laws of Dower, and other priviledges, with that reſpect and freedom they enjoy here with us, beyond what they do in other places. The firſt is a mere Grant, the vertue of their wives obteined it of our Anceſtors, and was wiſely by them Enacted in the favour of women; but were they generally ſo bad, as ſome men have made them in their ſcurrilous Invectives, which their Pamphlets are full of, they are in a fair way of looſing their Charter: but for the latter, it is our duty; that civil uſage and reſpect, we here give them, is moſt Chriſtian, and humane, and no more than what they deſerve; but they that ſhall ſet them in all reſpects on equal ground with their husbands, can plead neither Law, nor Preſcription in their favour, unleſs of their own making, which no vertuous and loyal Wife will ever give them thanks for. But in anſwer to ſuch as judge of things, not as they are, but as repreſented, by the falſe Perſpectives of their Fancies, that can create mountains out of mole-hills, and when it ſerves their turn dwindle them into Atoms, I muſt premiſe two things, to judge of ſome matters by.

1. That the Morality of things are the ſame now as ever, and are unalterable, and cannot be chang'd. This is no private opinion of my own, but of all, or moſt Caſuiſts; that I may explain my ſelf, hereby is meant the nature of any action, as it reſpects moral good, or evil, vertue, or vice.

2. That a thing may be ſaid to be materially, or in the nature of it evil, or to be ſo by prohibition. This being well underſtood, will ſerve to clear other paſſages beſides this. But to the matter in hand: If a married man commit a fault, or ſhould take an other wife, a woman may as well do the ſame: for it is juſt and reaſonable in their account, and all one with them. A ſingle man, by going in unto a married woman, doth not commit Adultery in ſo doing, it is but Fornication in him, and whatever it be in her, their love, good nature, or ſomewhat or other ſhall excuſe it; for there is nothing ſo unjuſt, or wicked, but ſome men will find a plea for it. But in anſwer to them, I grant, Poligamy, and Divorce, either, or both, are forbidden for the abuſe of it, or for greater purity: But there are many learned men ſay, they are not, and that Divorce may be

diſpens'd

diſpens'd with for weighty cauſes. Others bitterly inveigh againſt it, following therein thoſe, who make Marriage a Sacrament. And there is a third opinion of very learned men, exceeding rational, that miſtake not as ſome have, who affirm Poligamy permitted to the Jews for the hardneſs of their hearts, or that the people of God lived in fornication to increaſe the world; yet they approve not of Divorce unleſs for Adultery, but that Poligamy for a weighty cauſe might be had, as ſome things have been diſpenſed with, though forbidden. But the Law grants no Diſpenſation, and the faults of a man and his wife are on this account all one, as of thoſe that are ſingle; but in the nature of the thing there is great difference, as is ſufficiently diſcovered by the light of Nature, the Laws of God and Man, before and ſince Chriſt, and the reaſons on which thoſe Laws of Prohibition and Penalty are grounded.

SECT. VI.

Adultery what it is, and how forbidden by the Moral Law.

AS the ſin of Murther is the higheſt Breach of the Commandments of the ſecond Table, which containes our duty to our Neighbour, this of Adultery is with good reaſon thought to be the next, and we find it forbidden in theſe words, *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery, thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbours Wife,* and hereby is meant the defileing our Neighbours Bed, or going in unto his Wife; and by our Neighbour, every one whomſoever, far or near, that ſtand related to us, as Men or Chriſtians. *Luke* 10. 29. Amongſt the ſeveral Curſes that were pronounced to the children of *Iſrael* to deter them from their ſins, and bring them to repentance, we find theſe, *Curſed is he that ſmites his Neighbour ſecretly, curſed is he that removes his Neighbours Land-mark*; each of them Breaches of the Moral Law, againſt which theſe Curſes were pronounced. He that could pretend to remove his Neighbours Land-mark, might as well lay claim to his Wife; but if he actually defiled her, let him be who he would, married, or ſingle, there was but one Law for them: *He that committeth Adultery with his Neighbours Wife, the Adulterer as well as the Adulteress ſhall ſurely be put to death.* This Law was in force till the time of our Saviour, though others of the like authority were made void, by Traditions of the Elders: for we read of the Woman taken in Adultery, and brought unto him by the Phariſees; Chriſt delivers her out of their hands,

hands, by telling them, *He that was without ſin ſhould caſt the firſt ſtone at her*; her crime is not thereby leſſened, but the Son of God on this, and other occaſions, that we meet with in the Goſpel, declared his power on earth to forgive ſins, and to take away the penalty due unto them, with his compaſſion and readineſs to abſolve and pardon all that repent, and forſake them. And by this was the hypocriſy of the Phariſees reprehended, and detected, who urging the ſeverity of the Law againſt others, never looked home unto themſelves: though this was no Mote in the womans eye, there was a beam in theirs, as to the Judicial laws of the Iſraelites, though they are not in force to Chriſtians, meerly as ſuch; that the Moral Law is aboliſhed, none ever held but *Antinomians*, *Ranters*, *&c.* who commit all manner of iniquity, with greedineſs, and *ſin that grace may abound*. And is it not ſaid of their Statutes, *Deut.* 4. 7. *What Nation is there, that hath Statutes and Judgments ſo righteous, as thoſe that were ſet before them?* And an Argument only thence deduced, is of great weight to Chriſtians, who acknowledge the Divine Original and Authority of the Five books of *Moſes*, and is a good *medium* to prove a *Theſis* by, and brings more than a probablity with it. But we will go farther than this; and to prevent cavil about Words and Expreſſions, the ſame being uſed as to different things, as was before alledged, I ſhall ſhew what Adultery is, and in what ſenſe it is taken, as to matter of Law, and Guilt, two diſtinct things, yet one depending on the other, for without a Law there can be no knowledge of Sin.

For matter of Guilt I ſhall give you an Inſtance, that diſcovers what the ſentiments of the Gentiles were, as to theſe things by the light of Nature, who had the Law written in their hearts, of whom the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 2. *Doing by Nature the things contained in the Law, theſe not having the Law are a Law unto themſelves.* And we need go no further, for a proof of the Law of Nature, before the Moral Law was given, ſome knowledge whereof was written in their hearts, drawn and collected from the outward appearances and ſtate of things without them, and as far as it was thus perceived the meaſure of their duty, unto God, and themſelves, and their fellow-creatures. We have a notable inſtance of this recorded *Gen.* 20. When *Abraham* ſojourned at *Gerar*, the King of that place (I dare not call him an Heathen Prince, becauſe it is ſaid, *the fear of God was there*) had taken his wife from him: God appears to him in a dream, telling him, *Thou art but a dead man, for the woman, thou haſt taken, is anether mans wife*; he excuſes not himſelf by a plea of Love and Paſſion, (though ſhe was a fair woman,) but *in the integrity of my heart, and innocency of my heart have I done this*, looking upon her as his Siſter, not his Wife;

Wife; and God said unto him, *I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart, I therefore withheld thee from sinning against me*; and she was thereupon restored to her Husband. The like passage you find in the 12 Chap. which is enough only to mention, having been so long on the former: no one will affirm that either of these were single men, if they did we need not beg the question, or that *Joseph* was married when he refused the Temptation of his Mistriss, with a *how shall I do this wickedness, and sin against the Lord.* Men may call it Fornication, a Trick of youth, or what they please; but we see by these passages, what it is, and what it was ever by good men accounted. After the Law was given, I shall give but one instance instead of many, which we meet with in the Prophets, and that is, the words of *Nathan* to *David*; where the sin of Adultery is elegantly set forth, in a Parable by the Prophet, as you have it 11. *Sam.* 12. St. *Paul* also mentioneth this Law of the Husband; for the Breach of which, a woman is termed an Adultereſs; and alludes thereto. *Rom.* 7. 28.

As to matter of Law, in what sense it is taken, we have the joynt consent of all, or most Nations, before, and since the coming of Christ, who in one sort or other have inflicted Penalties for it: as in its nature it is worse, then that other sin of Whoredome, forbidden to the *Israelites*, who were a chosen people, herein all agree. I shall not therefore, as many do, swell a Treatise with Quotations, when the matter doth not require it; therefore, to omit a Cloud of Witnesses, Heathens, Mahumetans, and others, who would not obscure, but illustrate the truth, let us come nearer home, and amongst our selves in this Kingdome, where we have the opinion of very learned Divines, and good Casuists: and although, there is no such Law against it here, as hath been in some places, it may be supposed, from the difficulty of detecting the crime of Adultery, which might make a Law in that behalf useless: yet if any shall hold such rigorous proceedings too severe for these times, I shall not go about to disprove them, though Capital punishments are often inflicted on Thieves and Felons with less reason, were it not for that security which can be had and obtained by this course, easier then in the other, which is hard to be proved, as for the difficulty of detecting. We may observe that in the time of the late Usurpers, when Adultery was made Felony by a Statute, which with their Act for the strict observation of the Lords Day, was none of the worst thing they did; yet I never heard of any that suffer'd for it, not many I believe, and some of their Grandees are foully belied, if they could clear themselves of it. In the Republick of *Geneva* there is a Law extent, that punishes Adultery with death;

death; but notwithſtanding this an Hiſtorian obſerves, they are given to Dalliance in private, it may be thought but rarely to Adultery, this ſhewing what opinion they there have of it: the Papiſts make it a mortal ſin, though ſome of their Writers make any Breach of Wedlock and Divorce, tho for Adultery, to be Adultery; which nevertheleſs diſpens'd with, when they have thought good: But arguing about words ſignifies nothing, ſeeing I have fully proved what this ſin is, and although there may be ſome difference herein amongſt the aforeſaid Parties, none ever denied this; and how a man may be guilty of Adultery, by Divorce is before made appear. I ſhall conclude with that forementioned Law of the *Iſraelites*, which I ſhall not again recite, but only add this; that their Ordinances were derived from Heaven, therefore cannot be excepted againſt as partial, and humane Laws are to be obeyed, becauſe agreeable to the word of God, grounded on reaſon, and enjoyned by authority; and the reaſons of thoſe Laws I ſhall give you in the next.

SECT. VII.

The Reaſons of the ſeverity of the Laws, and Capital puniſhments inflicted for Adultery, and of the remedies aſſigned for jealouſy.

SOme may ſay this was very ſevere, and though a fault, might be paſſed by in the weaker Veſſels, and that it was great pitty ſuch extremity ſhould be uſed to them, as to Criminals, Felons, and notorious diſturbers of the publick peace; that they might never offend in this ſort, were they not drawn aſide and deceived by the other Sex. To this I anſwer, that the Law of God made both parties alike guilty, that it is great pity any woman ſhould deſerve this, and though a Law may be good and uſeful in many caſes, for the prevention of evil; and the extremity thereof, on ſome inflicted, unleſs for Murther, Treaſon, *&c.* they are rather to be inclined to mercy, that this crime is eaſy enough to be proved againſt women that forſake their Husbands to cohabit with other men; that the likelieſt means to prevent this, would be the depriving them of claim to their injur'd Husbands Eſtates; and the Act alſo hath, and may be proved by ſufficient Evidence, that this ſin is committed by ſome ſo openly in defiance, as it were of their duty, and without ſhame and remorſe, that it is no hard matter to diſcover it. This is no more than what I have known, though never

never a Partaker of their ſins: that lewd women are incouraged in their wickedneſs by their impunity, and there is no remedy to be had for it, unleſs Divorce, which they value not, who have rich and wealthy Friends, and good Joyntures, that carry away the greateſt part of their Husbands Eſtates; and Divorce in the poorer ſort would tend to the ruine of their Families, and though ſome think, that in Goſpel times they may be left to their Conſciences and the Diſcipline of the Church. I treat of Adultery here as it is a Breach of the Law of Nature, and what courſes may be taken to prevent it; it being too evident that ſome women make no conſcience at all of their Wayes, become obdurate and hardned by continuance in a ſin, which is not ſo harmleſs as they may imagine; for in the nature and tendence thereof what can be worſe.

Firſt, the end of the Creation of Woman, was ſecondary, and ſubordinate to that of Man; for him ſhe was formed, and to him ſhe owes her original and extraction. The Lord ſaid, *It is not good that man ſhould be alone, let us make him an help meet for him.* Gen. 2. 28. Her Husband is her Head and Superior, this our Law takes notice of, when it makes the murther of an Husband Petty-Treaſon, in the Wife as that of a Maſter, in a Servant the ſame; and doth not the like proportion hold good in other offences. But if men will give away, or ſell their Birthright like prophane *Eſau*, they may thank themſelves for a Meſs of Pottage: yet ſuch there are, that for filthy Lucre pimp to their Wives; who in this caſe are leſs to be blamed then they; but I would have men to know, although the Law of Submiſſion is no where aboliſht, they are not to be obeyed in things unlawful, neither are they to treat their Wives ſeverely, but to love and cheriſh them as themſelves; but if any think this Law of Submiſſion and Obedience, ſo hardly yielded by moſt, and ſtickled at by ſome, was pronounced as a Fruit of the Curſe, after the Fall, and not in Being before, but taken away by Chriſt; let them prove when, and where it was aboliſhed, which is founded in Nature, and before the Fall in Being; though their duty was eaſily yielded without reluctance, but now with difficulty, and by conſtraint. *Gen.* 3. 16.

This is againſt Nature, as was before made appear; and I wonder not in the leaſt, that in Popiſh Countries, where Whoredome hath been promoted for reaſons of State, and Curtizans ſwarm, Poligamy is in no caſe diſpenced with, nor Marriage of Prieſts: Falſe Notions of Marriage being of earlier date in the Church, then their Apoſtacy and defect, for more may be ſaid for it amongſt them, then here with us in *England*, ſet aſide Barrenneſs; for by that means a ſtop would be put to the pride and exceſs of Females, that forget the Law of their Creation; and inſtead of

being Help-meet to their Husbands, are a ruine and decay to their Fortunes and Estates (a rare thing here:) Our Country Women being of a provident, and careful temper for the most part, and excelling in Virtue Women of Forreign parts; and knowing their duty, they would endeavour in every thing to content and please their Husbands, living honest; the benefit whereof would accrue unto themselves. But a toleration of Poligamy, such as was in the Jews Common-wealth, would be of worse consequence to them, than their permission of Stews, and an inlet to such cheats and abuses, as nothing less then an Act of Felony to prevent them, can here secure us from, in an honester Clime, when so many there are that would never marry on a good account, would multiply Wives for their profit; and as the Law hath made provision for it, where such crimes are known, they ought to be duly punisht, and severely, as Adultery ever was in either Sex.

The last thing I shall mention is this; without the the Fidelity of their Wives, men would be cheated with a Spurious issue, brought up, and maintained for their own: Where Poligamy was permitted, whatsoever Children Men had by their Wives, or other Women, provision was to be made for them, each Woman knew her own, and could suffer no wrong on this account; but if Adultery had been suffer'd, they might have hatcht up other mens Brats in their Chimney corner, and provided for them as their Children, there being no remedy for it, as I know for, unless what can hardly be imagined, that a Whore should be so honest to inform them to the contrary, although this is not so common as to verify the Old saying; *It is a wise Child that knows his own Father*: it is the common consequence of Adultery, and is a great aggravation of this crime, an abuse for which no recompence can be made, and is alone sufficient to justify; the Severity of any Law to prevent it; but nothing will deter wicked men, who its greatly to be feared have sinn'd away the light of nature, and in their practice of Impiety are become worse then Heathens. For this cause it may thought, the like punishments have been inflicted on Virgins betrothed: if they were unbetrothed, the men were either to marry them, or if their Parents utterly refused it, to assign a Portion.: This was just and equal; but if they were betrothed, it was the same thing as if they had been married, for Matrimony being intended, and following in a short time after, as it ordinarily happens to those that are sure together; the same evil might ensue thereon, and is the same as if their Marriage were consummate. But we may note this, that in those days it was a rare thing for any to break off when sure together, (a common thing now) and some there are, have

parted

parted after the Banns of Matrimony have been publisht, by consent of friends. Hence is it that some have taken the wives of other men from such, as have been for several years in league with them; which if it be not an abuse of Matrimony, is a sign that it is a mony-matter with a great many. But to let this pass, a Virgin betrothed, in the Old Testament is termed a Wife, and a tryal in case of jealousie assigned her husband, as for the other that were actually married; and although they are now held impracticable, they might not be so then. And a stranger tryal than these we read of, in use amongst the *Saxons*, and other Nations, when women suspected were to pass barefoot over Coulters and burning Irons, a superstition in former times, for the cruelty thereof condemned, and long since out of use. For a remedy of Jealousie, *Charron* in his treatise of *Wisdom*, his counsel to men is, that they remember, most gallant men have fallen into this misfortune, and been content quietly to bear it; and to women he saith, *there is no counsel against this evil*, and there gives the reasons of it: And further, *if they were capable of counsel, a man would advise them not to care for it, or seem to perceive it*, and instances such women as have procured female-pleasure to their husbands, and in holy women of old, for multiplication of Stock. This can be no rule for us now. Now doth it thence follow, that wickedness, when known, ought to go unpunisht; or that men may take an illegal course to stock their commons? But we may hence observe, that women in old time lived peaceable, and quiet, were not very forward to tax and accuse their husbands, but endeavouring to approve themselves to them in obedience, and love. But to conclude this, our restriction of Marriage is most Christian, and agreeable to the Word of God, and Gospel-times, and the condition of human life, which is much altered from what it was in former times under the Law; and although the circumstances of all men are not alike then, or now, yet a conformity hereto is on all hands requisite. Wedlock is a holy state, wherein if there be any thing of trouble and inconvenience, it is rendred easie to those that marry in the Lord, and for whom a man is to forsake father and mother, and cleave unto his wife.

SECT. VIII.

Objections againſt Marriage out of the Scripture, and ancient Writers, and the riſe and growth of Monaſtical life.

I Intend not here to anſwer every frivolous Objection againſt Marriage; they who have no mind to marry, do well to let it alone, but ſuch as cannot abſtain ought to marry, elſe they ſhould never be perſwaded by my conſent: for they which intangle themſelves in Love and the thoughts of a Wife, have their minds taken off from other affairs. A man may marry at any time, but a good ſettlement in marriage is not always to be had; there is nothing worſe for any one, than to be put upon wiving too young, or before they well underſtand the courſe of the world, for Matrimony requires the moſt ſerious deliberation, and advice. But there are ſeveral paſſages in holy Writ, eſpecially in St. *Paul's* Epiſtles, that ſome alleadg againſt Marriage, and to the Clergy be not miſapplied, if they mean a ſingle life in thoſe that can abſtain, or that ſecond Marriages are forbidden them, which ſome will have to be meant of ſuch as had more wives than one at a time, therefore uncapable of holy Orders: others there are, that think the taking of a ſecond wife, after deceaſe of a former, to be forbidden them. If it be thus to be taken, Bigamy can be no ways commendable in a Clergyman; but we have no reaſon thence to judge uncharitably of a godly Miniſter, who may ſee a ſecond marriage to be neceſſary, every one knows beſt his own condition; yet that ancient Canon, which depoſed Deacons for Fornication, and admitted them to the Communion but as Lay-men, was not ſevere, for nothing can excuſe in them, what is evil more or leſs. Nor can this liberty, that by ſome is taken in marriage, warrant in the leaſt, though it ſeems to countenance, the practice of the Romaniſts, who on the other hand, exclude from Prieſthood thoſe that once marry, and require vowed Chaſtity of others. But for Churchmen, if they have the gift of Continency, to lead a ſingle life, being free from the cares and troubles of a married ſtate, to apply themſelves only to the Miniſtry, is exceeding commendable, the Revenues of the Church, by this means, in Hoſpitality and charitable uſes expended, for which they were in part given, and to which the Clergy are above others exhorted; hereby alſo would the mouths of their Adverſaries be ſtopt, and being done for the ſake of Chriſt, and the Kingdom of Heaven,

Heaven, they have the reward of that faithful Servant or Steward, of whom *much was required*, becauſe *much was given*, and (let no one ſay I am popiſhly affected for this) they are highly to be honoured and eſteemed for their works ſake; when ſome there are, that take upon them the holy function, and marry, not becauſe they cannot abſtain, but for ſuch cauſes they would not care to own.

As for vowed Chaſtity, or Monaſtical life, there is no command for it, yet I cannot ſay that is evil in its nature, which without a Vow is commendable; and an Oath, if kept, is not culpable, in what is lawful, and where it is neceſſary: But here it is not, and may have an evil tendence in thoſe that have not the gift of continency, and the making of thoſe Vows ſuppoſes ſo much, and it may be demanded of them, *who hath required theſe things at their hands?* Marriage we find honoured by our Saviour's preſence at a Wedding, and the beginning of Miracles wrought there; and Saint *Paul* ſaith of himſelf, *Have not I power to take a ſiſter to wife?* And in ſome things relating to Marri[illegible] and Single life, in this Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, he ſaith, that *he [illegible]keth as from himſelf, and not by commandment from the Lord*, they having written to him, as appears, concerning it, *ch.* 7. But there are many paſſages in ſome of the Fathers very ſevere againſt marriage, but we muſt look upon them as ancient men, that had ſeen the vanities of the world, contending with the hereſies and licentiouſneſs of the times; for there was a hereſie ſprang up in the days of the Apoſtles, and continued long after: Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory gives us an account of them, in their brutiſh Doctrines and licentious Practices, they reſembled our Sweet-ſingers, Ranters, *&c.* of latter date; they taught Fornication and promiſcuous Luſt to be no ſin, to hold their wives in common brotherly love, Adultery was nothing in their account being their daily practice; this was attended with a riotous exceſs in meats, and drinks, their God was their belly, and their belly their ſhame. In the Epiſtle of *Jude*, verſe the 19*th.* they are ſaid to be *they that ſeparate themſelves, and are ſenſual, not having the ſpirit.* There are many paſſages concerning them in that Epiſtle, wherein they reſembled the Gnoſticks of after times, who held Aſſemblies and Night-meetings, wherein they uſed all manner of promiſcuous luſts, adulteries, and inceſts, and theſe crimes by the Pagans, were objected againſt the Orthodox Chriſtians. By this means Religion began to be placed by ſome in the other extreme, in oppoſition to theſe, (no news in our time, to run from one extream to another,) in a ſolitary life, in abſtinence from meats, and the lawful uſe of Marriage. Chaſtity and Abſtinence were then the only vertues in their account, grown ricketty and diſproportionate to the reſt,

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their growth and nourishment substracted from the other: At length they arrived to such a prodigious height, as to outgrow the whole body of them, taken either as Moral vertues, or Christian duties, when to build and endow Houses for the Votaries of either sex was esteemed such an act of Piety, as to make amends for any act of Impiety or wickedness whatsoever, Adultery, Murder, or any thing; this was attonement sufficient, the merits of Christ not regarded, looking to be justified by their own performances. And for support of the several Orders then begun, and afterwards increast, divers Miracles were feigned, some of them very ancient, as appears by their Legends; and what is true of them proves nothing, but that holy women, sollicited to the embraces of heathen Rulers, or persecuting Tyrants, chose death rather than to yield unto their lusts, not so much for a Vow of Virginity, or Monastical life, unheard of in the first Centuries: but submitting to their pleasure, when by them required, had been as actual denial of their faith at the request of a Tyrant, as sacrificing to Idols a compliance to their worship, and carries more with it than the breach of Wedlock, or or vowed Virginity; as we read of young men, when they could not be drawn to sacrifice, Harlots have been set to allure them, and of holy Virgins, who had their heads smitten off, for not submitting to the lusts of their Persecutors, (this may be true enough;) that they recovered their senses, who so will, may believe, and I shall not go about to disprove the truth of this and other things recorded in their Legends, which agree not in the relation of them. But supposing them to be Votaries, what doth this signifie to the temptations of a Brothel, or Fryar Confessor in a Convent, which in aftertimes were so frequent, and prevailing, as to be the chief occasion (pretended at least) for dissolving of Religious Houses here with us, began by Cardinal *Wolsey*, who suppressed several smaller Monasteries, and afterwards followed by dissolution of the rest.

But there are some in our time, and within memory, that have exceeded all before them, and whatever they pretend in their scurrilous Libels, hatred of women, or prejudice against marriage, their cynical reflections, so far exceed the bounds of modesty, or sence, that one may easily thence discover what they aim at, Gain, or Applause; the itching humour will prompt them to write, or say any thing. I count it not worth while to refute their idle Sarcasms against Marriage. Some there are, that make the love of women sinful, however placed, and that desire implanted in Nature, and which all men more or less are subject to, derive in its original from the Stygian lake, and the author of all ill, who kindles it in the breasts of poor mortals (to torment them, they should say)

ſay) or his labour is loſt in bringing it ſo far, but to a worſe intent it ſeems than *Prometheus* his fire, ſtolen from Heaven, as the Poets fable, and for a noble uſe. Some go further than this, wiſhing there had been ſome other way of propagating Mankind, or, like the Angels in Heaven, they had been created without diſtinction of Sex, wickedly preſcribing and directing their great Creator in his works of Creation and Providence, when notwithſtanding the hypocriſie of ſome men, and the great adoe of others, there is no natural deſire or any of the Paſſions ſinful, but as they are inordinate or exceſſive, which is blameable in any, or are contrary to the morality of a Precept; which is true not only in this, but the like may be ſaid of all the reſt of them, of Love and Hatred, Anger, Deſire, *&c.* Is it not lawful for a man to covet or deſire that which is good? without doubt it is; but it is then ſinful, when it becomes inordinate, or contrary to that command, which ſecures to every one their propriety.

This is true of every irregular deſire, and of concupiſcence in the largeſt extent of it, and in each part thereof, and of which it is ſaid *Jam.* 1.15. *When luſt hath conceived it bringeth forth ſin, and ſin when it is finiſhed bringeth forth death*: but is more eſpecially verified in the tranſgreſſion of our firſt Parents, by which was tranſmitted the whole body of ſin and death to their Poſterity, and the curſe denounced in caſe of diſobedience, that *dying they ſhould dye* (a natural death, or diſſolution, the conſequence thereof,) in them fulfilled on the day they taſted of the forbidden fruit, which was the firſt ſin of Deſire or Concupiſcence, before in being, but then grown inordinate, and ſet upon the creature more than the Creator, *Eve* being deceived by the Serpent with the deſire of knowledge and fairneſs of the fruit, and *Adam* by his wife, and then they became dead as to Spiritual life, and communion with God, as are all that deſcend from them, untill they are renewed, and thereby become dead unto ſin, though not wholly freed from it. *Rom.* 6.2. compared with *7th.* 17*th.* 23*d.* 24*th.* But how is it then that any one can be ſaid to be dead unto ſin, when ſin dwelleth in them, and the law of ſin, or the old man is ſtill warring in their members? Yes, notwithſtanding this body of death, called the *old man*, the regenerate ſtill remaineth, their minds are renewed, and brought off from the creature to the Creator, as the ſupreme Good; and this is wrought in them by the Word and Spirit, derived from a faith that purifies the heart, and enableth them to fulfill the whole Law in an unfeigned love to God in the firſt place, and to their Neighbours as themſelves, *for on theſe depend the Law and the Prophets.* Math.22. 37. Thoſe groundleſs conceits before mentioned are but idle fancies and dreams, and without this, can never avail them any thing, and were

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Forerunners of Apoſtacy, foretold of 1 *Tim.* 4. *In thoſe that ſhould forbid to marry, and command to abſtain from Meats.* Verſe 2. *Speaking Lyes in Hypocriſie:* although there are ſome expreſſions in the Fathers that ſeem to warrant them, I have already given you the occaſion thereof; and let me further add, that ſome of them were erroneous, the holieſt but men, and none of them infallible, nor are any to be believed any further then they are agreeable to reaſon, and the word of God; and I will appeal to any one, whether or no Marriage can be a Sacrament or a holy State, any further then the relative duties of Wedlock are performed: And whereas the Apoſtle maketh mention of a myſtery, he expreſly ſaith it of Chriſt and the Church, and what was Marriage before Chriſts coming ſeveral ages, when there was a better agreement, and harmony of affections between *Solomon*, and his *Ægyptian* Spouſe as is thought, then with many of our Daughters of *Zion*, and their Chriſtian Husbands? If they will have it a Sacrament, I have ſhewn how far, and in what ſenſe it is ſo; and they who have written of Wedlock, may give it what Encomium's they pleaſe.

SECT. IX.

Againſt Fornication, and of Marriage in its Primitive State.

THere are many grave Leſſons of Morality well meant, but in this matter making all things one and alike, or denying what is as plain as any thing can be, unleſs to ſuch as are of a temper very ſevere and moroſe, or have been ſly ſinners in their youth; and to make amends for their paſt Debauchery, harden men in their impiety, rather then diſſwade them from a vain and ſinful courſe of life. Pretences of love to Women, are not always tricks and devices to deceive them, it may happen ſo indeed, and in the way of Matrimony, as well as out of it: A poor Fellow may get ſome Belly Timber by it, or the Parſon a Speel by it, and that love be wanting, which is the rational ground thereof; and is not an amour alone without amity and friendſhip, by a Marriage Contract confirmed. The bound to our deſires they are not to paſs, for the procreation of our kind, our confinement thereby rendred more pleaſant and eaſy, and is therefore perpetual and conſtant. Of this doth ſacred Hiſtory give us inſtances very remarkable; that of *Ammon*, to *Thamar*, was an inceſtuous luſt; the occaſion of his untimely death, which is ſaid

to

to be a punishment for his Incest: but we may rather think the death of *Ammon*, and the succeeding Rebellion of *Absalom*, with his Incest by going in unto his Fathers Concubines, an infliction on *David*, for his Adultery with *Bathsheba*: and whereas it is said that *Ammon* forced her, his unkindness to her was worse than the Fact, tho an incestuous Rape. Let such take notice of this, who make love to Women only to disgrace them, or deceiving their expectation, to their disadvantage turn them off. But Rape can never be effected, unless on those who are very weak and feeble (without consent of their Wills, which compulsion may at length force from them) and is so bad a thing, as to be made Felony by a Statute, which if any one shall look into, and take a view of, will find Enacted rather to prevent Rapes, and forc'd Marriages on Heiresses, and great Fortunes, frequent in former times, and cannot always be prevented since: but he that shall hazard his Neck for the enjoyment of a peevish Wench, reaps as little pleasure as profit by the Bargain. Lust and Ambition have been the cause of more Rapes then ever Love hath, which ought not to be pretended but where it really is; therefore can be no pretence for Fornication, either as a colour to deceive them, or a profession thereof.

Let us see whether or no it can be made a Plea for Whoredome; one would think the Diseases which attend this vice should dissuade men from it: but how can any one pretend love for the Embraces of a Harlot, from whom they receive no further kindness then what they pay for; and is a common thing in requital, to kick and abuse their Whores as soon as made use of; and if they meet with better entertainment, it is occasion'd rather by the mild temper, and disposition of some men they have to do with, then their deserts. They speak honestly who affirm, it is not so much their loves, as lusts, that prompts them to it, and go to cover one sin with another, making Love and Friendship the Bands of humane Society, and not the least part of Marriage a Plea for Whoredome, a sin against the Laws of both. I speak not here of the way of making Love, wherein some men are most to seek where it is, but how far it may be admitted as a Plea, which can never be sure where it is not, as they themselves must confess; much less then can it be admitted as an excuse for Adultery, for the Law of Nature giving us a right to our own peculiars, by the same reason we are excluded from other mens. But I have already shewn the evil of this crime, and that good men have ever regulated their desires, and if fallen into this sin, have recover'd themselves by repentance. Now as Love can be no Plea for it, no necessity can excuse a thing evil and injust in its nature, and for which no

recompence can be made to the injured person, as before proved; and it hath been very seldome known that any godly or righteous person hath been guilty of it.

As to the great Question, *Matrimonium sive Conjugio*, without a lawful, or Conjugal love, whereby the ends of Marriage are not answered in Mutual Society, or comfort of life: for prevention of the former, a commendable care is taken, by publishing of Banes, and granting Licences to marry, which ought to be well lookt to: the latter oftimes happens; and that some men never have a good settlement in Matrimony, which is a favour from the Lord, as also are Children, and the Fruit of the Womb, who are a blessing unto those, whose ways are pleasing unto God. Yet this for the reasons given in the Fifth Section, is no Plea for Divorce, which ought not to be had, unless the Contract were sinful, and impure: nor can it be termed Fornication, unless with respect to the Purity of Marriage, in the Primitive State, which with the best of men is not altogether the same, as if man had continued in his original righteousness; and the weaker Sex, who were the first in Sin, had answered the ends of their Creation, when the Woman was adorned with such perfection, as rendred her worthy of his love and desire, for whom she was formed, in a great measure, now defaced by sin, and the knowledge of evil; that perverseness, and their vanity, so much taxt in them, the Fruits of the Fall, and of the Curse, and good men have in all ages been ensnared therewith. As the Womb had been then fruitful, without pain and sorrow yielding its increase, Male and Female, coming together after Gods appointment, had been joyned in an inviolable Union, and a holy state without Matrimony as an Evidence to decide Controversy, or an Oath since in force; as also Divorce in some cases useful, and second Marriages so far from being evil in all causes, that to some a duty, and by God commanded, as for the raising up of Seed to a Brother deceas'd, and to those that cannot abstain. Nor can it be thought Divorce is restrained for the sake of evil men, or to abet and countenance abuse of the Ceremonies, to the undoing of any one: For the Precepts of Christ in other things as well as this, tend to reduce us to that State of Perfection from whence we are fallen. This restraint alone can never do it, but essential honesty, and justice, and doing unto others as we would be done by our selves, would soon bring Marriage, and every thing else, to its Primitive State as near as may be, or our present condition will admit of, which shall be further shewn.

But because the only quarrel of some men to their Wives is, that they are their own, seeing the abuse of a thing that is good and necessary can never

never take away the use of it, (as hath been fully proved;) and that Matrimony is as natural, as for men to form themselves into Societies. It is very absurd, and prepostorous, for such as have fair play in their matching, not over-reacht, to prefer the caresses of a deceitful and inconstant Miss, to the Embraces of a loving and virtuous Wife: How dishoneſt is it then to spend and consume their Estates on them, to the ruine and decay of their Families, or for such have issue by the wife of their youth deceas'd, a virtuous and faithful Consort, to injure and wrong her Children for a second match? The liberty that was taken in Marriage in former times, and the failings of good men, are no example for us in these last days, when God hath *spoken to us by his Son*; and we find the wiſest of men, who had been drawn into great Snares by his numerous Wives and Concubines, renouncing this Vanity. *Eccl.* 7. Of such therefore, that give themselves over to the pursuit of sensual lusts and pleasures, as if they were born to no other end, and make it the whole buisiness of their lives, it may be thought their hearts are hardned through the deceitfulness of sin, in a Snare that is hard to recover themselves out of: for although spiritual wickedness, and of the mind, are in their nature worse then sins of the body, these being given way to, and indulged by intemperance, and excess, of what kind soever, become habitual, and our minds thereby deprived of that purity, which can only render us blessed here; and without it let men make what profession they will of Religion, they do but dream of Heaven, and Eternal happiness in another life.

The moderation and continency of the Primitive Christians, was singular and remarkable in this respect; neither in, or out of Matrimony, making provision for the lusts of the flesh, and when they Contracted themselves, it was, that the ends of Marriage might be answered by the Contract, therefore seldome marrying above once, Monagamy being the Primitive Institution, founded in Nature (exclusively, and with respect to its continuance in the State of Grace:) second Marriages, of what sort soever, in the Law of Nature since, by which, as men were not always bound unto one Woman during her life, nor second Marriage in the other Sex restrained after dissolution of a former by decease, 1. *Cor.* 7. 39. God either willing, or permitting it for the increase of the world; yet there neither is, nor ever was universal liberty, and without exception for it; but when and to whom by this Law in force. A Polygamy therefore was not common amongst the people of God of [illegible] second Marriages with the Primitive Christians, and Disciples of Christ: the now frequency thereof thereof, doth rather prove it very [illegible], than a commendable thing, unless very good reasons can be assigned for it,

by Christians that are more than once contracted: And the Question, so often canvast by Civilians in the Schools, *An Poligamia sit licita*, may be applied also unto single Marriage, and, *Whether or no Bigamy is lawful*, very well disputed; yet that Assertion is very absurd, which shall make it Fornication in all that are thus married, and no better than Mates: for it may sometimes, though not commonly happen, that a second Marriage is more warrantable than a first, and on better grounds contracted; and a good and lawful Consort hath not always been a first Wife, nor the ends of marriage answered by the Contract, especially in those, which Misfortune or Deceit hath been the occasion of: So I term it in relation to second causes, for there is nothing contingent with God. And if Poligamy hath in such cases been used (as for increase of the world) by holy men without Divorce, it was when the Laws of Nations forbid it not; insomuch that Marriage, by God ordained, respects not so much the circumstance of Time, which is first, or last, as the order of Nature therein to be observed, and that National Constitutions be submitted to in it.

SECT. X.

The Law of Nature in other Instances.

THE Law of Nature, which contains in it those Moral principles that are unvariable, and grounded on the natural relations between God and man, and one man and another, is eternal in the Obligation of it, and the rule of our actions according to the condition of life: the opinion therefore of those, who define Honesty, *a life according to Nature*, (if rightly understood) can by none be excepted against; but after the vulgar Notions of Honesty, it is a weed that grows in every garden, and a hard matter to find a man that is not honest: Such a one is an honest man, because he never had the courage to take the High-way, or dexterity to cut a Purse, yet can enrich himself with the spoil of his Neighbours, cheat and cozen without any danger of the Law, which brings such as are fool-hardy to the Gallows. Another hath got a great Estate together by Extortion, may defraud the Labourer of his Hire, and the Minister of his Dues, yet pass for an honest man nevertheless; and its like such a one may never have a Bastard-child laid to his charge, it is a chargeable sin, or, to conceal it, he hath honestly provided for the Nurse. Another is an honest man, because he pays every one their own, can suit him-

himself to all companies, and carries it fair, that he may impose upon their understanding, and thereby insinuating himself to their several humours, can the easier work them to his will and pleasure; yet such as these shall pass for honest men with those, who look on outward shows in men only for their interest, or conformity to the Laws, so far as may excuse them from the penalty thereof.

Now let me ask any one, whether all these can be said to be honest men or no? For what is Moral honesty, but disposition of the mind to Vertue in general, or, as it is usually taken, for justice to our selves, and others. I shall add no more as to our dealings with men; but there is honesty of the Body as well as of the Mind, and the Law of Nature layeth no restraint on our desires, that are not vitious, and debauch't: as in Temperance, a man may be *felo de se* in the Defect, as well as Excess; for as he may surfeit himself by drinking overmuch, he may so long abstain therefrom, when nature requires it, as may procure him such a feavorish heat, that no liquor can allay his dryth. We should order our selves therefore by the prescript of Nature, and take it in such things as our rule, and guide. The like may be said of Chastity, and Marriage-rites.

A man may take an honest course (as he thinks) to prevent an evil, and it may hasten it upon him, the means that he uses being unreasonable, and unjust, especially when he never well examins things, but is swayed by common opinions. And a man may also (considering how the world now goes) in some things be too just, and to such a one that of the Preacher is good counsel, *Be not righteous overmuch, nor over wise, lest thou be left desolate*: for a mans mind being possess'd with vulgar notions, may think that dishonest, which is reasonable just, and necessary; insomuch that Honesty is not always the best Policy, or there are mistakes concerning it.

But the greatest mistakes, and that are most pernicious, are those wherein our souls are immediately concern'd; and it is very dangerous for any to have their minds ensnared with the principles of contentious Enthusiasts, to look on Religion as a matter of talk, and dispute, which hath an ill influence on mens lives; or when they believe the truth of the Scripture, should be reasoned with as Christians, and made sensible of their obligations to a holy life, have their minds amused with the thoughts of a work which they know not what to make of, but expect one time or other to be wrought in them, and which some pretending to, have acted things dishonourable to the profession of Christ. For discharge of my conscience I shall further proceed.

A duty enjoyned by the law of Nature, and a fundamental one too, is

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Obedience to Superiors. This is a duty from Wives to their Husbands, Childred to their Parents, Servants to their Masters, *&c.* though in a different capacity; and, to speak truth, there is a relative duty on all hands. A branch also of this duty is Obedience to the Government, and to those that are in Authority, and this is required in the Word of God, which teacheth us to *honour the King*, who is Supreme, and to *pray* for him; to him we owe a Natural duty and Allegiance, which no pretence of Religion can excuse us from, nor from that duty before mention'd to our Parents, as is clear from the words of our Saviour of the tradition of the Elders, his reproof of *Peter*, though in his own defence, which fully proves it. And let men call themselves what they will, Disaffection to the Government is a bad thing, and no sign of a good Christian in any one whatsoever: But our great and indispensable duty, is that Obedience and Worship we owe unto God, as we are Men as well as Christians, and is written with indelible characters in the hearts of all men, even of those who are most fallen short of the glory of God, and this Law of their Creation. And although God hath divers ways revealed himself to his people, who worship him aright, as in old time by his *Prophets*, and in these last days by his *Son*, his Word being their rule and direction in their *drawing nigh unto him*, and that *faith cometh by hearing* is true, and by reading of the Word, and Prayer; we are not only to look upon them as ordinances appointed to that end, but as our continual duty, and by which we return him thanks for those benefits we receive from him, and daily expect at his hands. We are not therefore to think, that in vain *we tread his Courts*, because we find not what many say they *experience*, an Extraordinary appearance to their Souls in a work of *Conviction* (as they term it) at the hearing of such or such a word, and to which they have recourse for their *Evidences*; a work of Faith different, as they give out, from the Faith of other people; not only of such, as say they believe, but are ignorant, or live profanely, but of those also who profess they believe those things, that are recorded of Christ by the Evangelists, and the Truth he hath confirmed by Miracles, and the Tehimony of those, who were Eye-witnesses, and inspired, therefore expected salvation by him, conforming their lives according to his Word, and are reckon'd sober, and moral men at least.

The publick worship of God, which consists in hearing the Word, and in Prayer, is therefore rightly termed a *Service*, our *reasonable* one it is, by no means to be neglected. Wicked men may prosper in this life, and such as never call upon God, it may go well with them here, but being hardned therein their condition is so much the worse. Although the beginnings

ginnings of Faith are but small, wherever it is, is not to be derided as an historical and notional Faith, when shewn by its **Works**; for if Inspiration fails us, what means have we left to know Christ? What Faith is it, which was *once deliver'd to the Saints*, and that Truth, of which the Church is the *ground*, and *pillar*? 1 Tim. 3. 15. The Ministration of the Spirit accompanies the Word, believed on the record given of Christ, and the use of those Ordinances appointed by him; yet are neglected by many who frequent the Assemblies, and are persons of a good life and conversation, either judging themselves unfit, or seeking for Inspiration, for I know not what else to call it, unless I term it Enthusiasm, by which Convictions are so variously handled in the works of some men, and the truth perplext with difficult niceties, which takes away and discourages Christian endeavour, and practice.

My last Observation is this, That Abstinence is a duty required in times of Devotion, and Worship, and for preparation thereto; That religious Fasts for Humiliation, and when commanded by Authority, be strictly observed, and kept; and that Oaths be taken, when necessary, either in obedience to Authority, for clearing of the truth, or for confirmation of our words, when matters doubtful arise: *An Oath for confirmation is the end of strife.* Heb. 6. 16. I shall conclude with a word of Advice.

Let men beware of false Teachers, and their Doctrine, which tends to carnal security, the overthrow of the faith, to obliterate the light of Nature, and the dictates of Conscience. You who profess Illumination beyond your brethren, place not Religion in Opinion; it is a good thing to have ones understanding rightly informed, but Religion is not to be made an occasion of strife and contention, when men shall separate from one another for the smallest difference, and each party is divided amongst themselves. Doth not St. *Paul* in his Epistles exhort to peace, and unity, to be *like-minded, and speak the same thing, holding the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, foreseeing the evil consequence of Schisms and Divisions in the Church. Value not your selves by the ill lives of the scandalous, and openly profane, lest you be out in your reckoning, but by conformity to the precepts of Christ, and examine whether or no you have *the fruits of the Spirit.* Gal. 5. 22, 23. Jam. 3. 17.

There are many Antichrists in the world, and unless God send a healing Spirit among us, what will the burning of the Pope signifie, or the destruction of *Rome*, by some men to a year predicted, avail the common cause of Christianity? Look back upon the state of the Church under Old Testament, when *Jeroboam* and his Successors had placed golden

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Calves in *Dan* and *Bethel*, causing *Israel* to sin, and the Land was defiled with their Idolatries: The ten Tribes were carried into Captivity, and the Jews for their sins into *Babylon*. Upon their return a second Temple was built, and the Church was reformed, their daily Sacrifice, unless in times of persecution, ceased not; but they were corrupted in their morals, divided into Heresies, and Sects; there were *Essenes*, and *Pharisees*, who made a show of Sanctity, and *Sadduces*; and there arose *Fanaticks*, who with their followers perisht. These things continued untill their Temple was destroyed, by the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles the Partition-wall was broken down, and an end was put to their Church-State. If the *casting away* of them be the *reconciling* of the world, what will the *receiving* of them be, but *life from the dead*.

FINIS.